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THE INDYPENDENT
296 JULY 2025

Zohran Mamdani and 300 of his supporters gather in a Brooklyn church in early December for the first training of field leads who would oversee the campaign's door-to-door canvassing.

MICHAEL PAULSON

HOW IT HAPPENED

MEET THE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT THAT PROPELLED ZOHRAN MAMDANI'S HISTORIC PRIMARY VICTORY

COVERAGE STARTS PAGE 4

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388 Atlantic Ave, 2nd Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11217
917-426-4856
www.indypendent.org
X: @TheIndypendent
Instagram: theindypendent

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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION IS BACK

BERNIE SANDERS AND ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ *made national headlines earlier this year when they barnstormed the western states. They drew massive crowds in places like Utah, Idaho and rural California vowing to take on the billionaires whose wealth and power have swamped our political system.*

It's one thing to fight oligarchy rhetorically. It's another to do it in real time while staring down a hostile political and media class. That's the challenge Zohran Mamdani will face starting next January, assuming he defeats incumbent Mayor Eric Adams and Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa in the November general election. He appears more than up for the moment.

Like Trump and AOC, Mamdani is a savvy communicator who brings attention to himself in order to push his message, a requirement for a politician who wants to break through in our distracted digital age.

Mamdani credits Sanders as a major influence in his life and is poised to revive "the political revolution" that Sanders called for during his presidential runs. The Vermont senator galvanized supporters with the battle cry of "Not Me Us" and reminded them frequently that no one leader by themself could overcome the power of the billionaire class. It would take millions of people getting involved in the political process. Beyond those broad strokes, he never explained what he meant.

In his second presidential campaign, Sanders vowed to be an "organizer-in-chief" and his campaign doubled as a social movement, using its massive email list to urge supporters to join picket lines and local protests. What Sanders had in mind with his political revolution was a broad-based mobilization of millions of people engaged in a constant, ongoing struggle against oligarchic power in all its forms and using the momentum from smaller victories to fight for larger ones. Sanders' solidaristic vision was best expressed at an October 19, 2019 rally in Queensbridge Park that drew 26,000 supporters. At the end of his speech, he implored crowd members in his Brooklyn brogue to look around them. He then asked "Will you fight for someone you don't even know?" And the crowd roared, "Yes!"

■ ■ ■

WE ALL KNOW how Bernie 2020 ended. His vague but audacious vision for transforming society seemed to expire with his campaign. One of those present at the Queensbridge Park rally was Zohran Mamdani who had just launched his campaign for a Queens state assembly seat. As a democratic socialist, he believes that a society no longer under the domination of a small, self-serving capitalist class would be a freer and happier one. He is also practical enough to be focused on winning tangible gains for the working class – a rent freeze, universal childcare, free and fast buses – in the present that can set the stage for more ambitious advances in the future.

There's vast potential for an organizing boom under a Mayor Mamdani. To give a few examples, renters dealing with negligent slumlords have good reason to form tenant unions. Immigrants and their allies will be emboldened to resist ICE. If municipal grocery stores are well-received, what about bringing government-run gyms and theaters to underserved parts of the city?

■ ■ ■

THE INDY *will be marking its 25th anniversary this fall. Over the past quarter century, we've helped seed the ground for this moment by amplifying the voices of social movements from across the city and spotlighting the rise of insurgent politicians like Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Zohran Mamdani from early in their political careers. The political transformation now underway in New York City marks a sea change for us. Some of the scrappy outsiders we cover will be moving to the inside. Others will continue to clamor from the outside but with unprecedented access to the levers of power. Looming over all of this will be the scowling presence of Donald Trump.*

Both before and since the June 24 primary, the fear-mongering corporate media propaganda machine that reflexively defends a broken status quo, has shown it ain't going anywhere. And with your help, neither are we.

We are delighted to announce we recently received a major grant from the Puffin Foundation. We are grateful for their support and welcome contributions, large and small, to give us the resources to meet this moment. Please go to **indypendent.org/donate** *and make a generous one-time contribution or become a monthly sustainer. You can also send a check to* **The Indypendent/388 Atlantic Ave/Brooklyn, NY 11217** *or hit the Venmo code on the bottom of the front page.*

Onward,

John Tarleton
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
THE INDYPENDENT

THE STREET HAS SPOKEN

ZOHRAN IS ONE OF US, AND WE'RE SO READY FOR IT

NICHOLAS POWERS

A NEW GENERATION RISES: *Seen on Tompkins Avenue in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.*

By Nicholas Powers

"Waz up New York City," future hizzoner Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced at the Haitian concert Bayo in Brooklyn. "We are going to fight to get Haiti off the travel ban! We are going to stand up for Haiti because you taught the world about freedom!"

My friend leaned close, turned the cell phone up. The shaky video panned inside the Barclays Center. Inside a churning sea of New Yorkers cheering, spinning shirts like helicopter blades, saying the Haitian, "Ohh-Ohh!".

My friend is Haitian and said Trump wants to deport her people. Mamdani can help stop it. The video paused. On my lap, the image of Mamdani on the Jumbotron, hand above his head like a lightning rod and surging toward him, a rising wave, New York, all of us, like a perfect storm.

I sighed. Nowadays, President Trump was on TV, on our cellphones, on newspapers, he growled from the White House. He threatened our lives. He threatened war. He, the Senate, the House, and the Supreme Court were like an impenetrable castle. It felt hopeless. Until now. Until Zohran Mamdani.

The people are rising, again. We, New York, the birthplace of Trump, are finally ready to bury him. He uses divide and conquer. He uses hate and fear. We have the power of unity, it's an awesome force holding the city together. Our unity is fueled by a need that cuts through religion, race, class, our legal status. We need each other. New York thrives because every day, we see each other and we help.

Looking up from the phone, I see neighbors and strangers talking, kids wobbly on bicycles, men giving a dead car a jump. It's easy to see how Zohran won. He bet on the street, on the people. His victory is not enough, already, the wealthy are lining up to defeat him. We need to do more than vote. We need a political revolution. The question remains, how badly do we want to be free?

STREET SIGNS

"Who the fuck is Quran?" I scrunched my mouth and held my hands out like why care.

"Zohran," he said. "With a Z. Zohran."

"Bro, I'm teasing you," I motioned with my beer.

My boy was all in on Mamdani. He was a member of the Democratic Socialists of America. He called and knocked on doors. Was this a man-crush? I saw Mamdani in a Tik Tok ad. The mayoral candidate had Golden Retriever energy, buoyant, jump on your chest and lick your face energy.

We walked down Tompkins Avenue in Bed-Stuy as he gestured manically about the "new" New York that Mamdani heralded, like a mad scientist in a Hollywood movie. He was tall, Indian, always had a book in hand or pressed to chest like a shield. I just couldn't go there. I burnt out my gay-adjacent political man-crushes on Obama and Bernie. True believers saw what they needed to see. They saw Jesus walking across the Hudson. I saw another over-promising politician who will let us down.

Cynicism protected me. Yet every step we took, the street was telling me to look again. Written on sidewalk chalk, I saw, "Save New York! Vote Zohran!" and "Don't Rank Cuomo". When I saw a poster of Zohran, it was untouched, pristine. When I saw one of Cuomo, it was trashed, ripped or devil horns drawn in magic marker on him. Zohran on streetlights. Zohran in windows. Zohran pamphlets at cafes and on cars. So many pamphlets that it looked like Valentine's Day in Bed-Stuy with everyone carrying a red flower.

I knew then, in a sub-conscious way, Zohran was going to win. The Street chose him. The People spoke months before voting. New York wanted Zohran because Zohran saw us, and through him we saw ourselves. We are stronger than racism. We are better than homophobia. We fight against classism. We call out scapegoating and fearmongering. We sacrifice ourselves to save each other's lives. We did during 9/11, Hurricane Sandy and Covid. We did during the blackouts. We do it every day.

The Street knows. The Street sees through our masks. It sees the Muslim teen skateboarding in a full hijab. It sees Hasidic men making it rain at the strip club. It sees half drunk Rastas, arms slung over pink-haired gay gentrifiers singing "True" by Spandau Ballet. It sees our kids, playing as the parents watch and play referee. It sees us struggle to keep our families together as the bills go unpaid and keep our jobs when the trains are late. It sees us try to give our children a better life when we can barely afford today.

Toward the end of the campaign, Mamdani walked from Inwood Park at the top of Manhattan to the Staten Island Ferry, shaking hands, hugging, smiling and taking photos, giving dap. The video of his 15-mile trek went viral. He strode the Street and embraced the People. He put his body, and life out on the line to say, "I know who we really are. We are not the Concrete Jungle, Dog-Eat-Dog city that Mayor Adams portrayed. We are not the weak, scared city that Cuomo says only he can protect from Bad Trump. We are New York fucking City. We got this."

VOTING FOR THE BETTER ANGELS

Election Day, I followed the street signs, the chalk "Vote Zohran!", the pamphlets, the smiling neighbors playing his ads on cellphones, waiting in line. I went in the voting booth, and filled in the circle next to Zohran. Outside, in the bright sun, I felt a weight drop from me. Fear.

I rubbed circles in my chest. The simple act of voting reminded me that all the right-wing propaganda was bullshit. It wasn't real. We are real. We are more real than ideology. The power of New York is that it forces us to deal with the truth, the ugly truth and the handsome truth of real people. It is why 24 years after Islamic terrorists destroyed the Twin Towers and killed 3,000 of us, we can elect a Muslim Democratic Socialist. Zohran is New York, a city that only works because we recognize our common humanity.

Trump lost in this election. Hate lost, too. I stood in the park, in the distance was the Freedom Tower. Next up, we win the mayor's race. We take the streets back from ICE. We honor the working class with an affordable city. We show the nation and the world how it's done. We got this.

HOW THE RA

KARA MCCURDY

ZOHRAN MAMDANI'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER DESCRIBES HOW A MOVEMENT DETHRONED A DYNASTY

By Elle Bisgaard-Church

Note: Elle Bisgaard-Church is Zohran Mamdani's campaign manager and has also served as his chief of staff in the New York State Assembly. This communique was released on June 26 and has been lightly edited for style and concision.

On the evening of June 24th, Zohran Mamdani defeated Governor Andrew Cuomo and a crowded field of candidates to secure the Democratic nomination for Mayor of New York City. With 93% of votes reported, Zohran won 43.5% of the vote to Cuomo's 36.4%, while Comptroller Brad Lander earned 11.3%. This electoral outcome has shocked the political establishment, made front page news across the globe, shown a new way forward for the Democratic party, and challenged preconceptions about the New York City electorate. But any narrative that this victory occurred by accident is false. This was the result of a campaign that sought to reach New Yorkers in every corner of the city by deploying an unprecedented communications, field, and political program. This is how Zohran won.

EXPANDING THE COALITION

Zohran turned out historic numbers in traditionally progressive areas, and then expanded his coalition by overperforming — and winning — working class areas across the city.

We won progressive strongholds like Astoria, Greenpoint, and Williamsburg, while also overperforming in multiethnic, working class neighborhoods like Jamaica and Forest Park in Queens. He showed further remarkable successes by winning: working class neighborhoods that Eric Adams won in 2021; working class neighborhoods in the northern shore of Staten Island; and areas that swung rightward for Trump in 2024. For example, Zohran won Woodhaven, Queens — a majority Hispanic neighborhood — by nine points. Woodhaven swung 30+ points towards Trump in 2024 from Biden 2020. Zohran won by nearly three percent in Castle Hill, a low-income, majority Hispanic neighborhood in the Bronx that swung towards Trump by over 20 points.

Zohran went from obscurity, to frontrunner, to the Democratic nominee in four months. He closed an incredible gap to win the election in the first round: in Emerson's February poll, Zohran was in last place with just 1% of the vote — trailing frontrunner Andrew Cuomo by 32%. Just four months later, Emerson's poll had Zohran in a close second in the first round with 33.7%, and winning by 3.6% in the final round. He made a crowded field a two-person race, gaining approximately 10 points in each month's Emerson poll.

Our campaign accomplished this through the following tactics:

COMMUNICATIONS

The campaign offers a model for how to talk to voters anchored in three principles: consistency, clarity, and authenticity. Zohran launched his campaign in October by talking about a New York that working people could afford. The banner hanging behind him as he delivered his victory speech on Primary Night read "Afford to Live & Afford to Dream." The campaign is unwavering in its fidelity to the central message of affordability across all its communications.

That consistency of message was buoyed by its clarity. Audiences throughout the campaign would finish Zohran's lines as he listed off his three signature policies of freezing the rent, making buses fast and free, and providing universal childcare. That's because they required no translation: voters could easily understand how putting Zohran in City Hall would change their day-to-day lives.

And Zohran was an authentic messenger. Campaign videos and media captured Zohran's genuine love for New York City and saw him criss-cross the City as he held real conversations with everyday New Yorkers. Those conversations were centered around listening: his very first viral video came after Trump was elected, as Zohran asked voters in parts of the city where Trump's support had surged to share their concerns — New Yorkers that the political class has long neglected. A campaign video on Zohran's plan to tackle "Halalflation" turned a wonky policy proposal on regulations into a viral social media moment which led to a glowing piece in Eater that lived on the frontpage for 24 hours. Utilizing

CE WAS WON

innovation to maximize traditional means of campaigning played a critical role in the campaigns success. This is not a sterile campaign insulated from the City; it's a campaign deeply immersed within the City.

These three principles came across in the campaign's videos, which were many voters' first introduction to Zohran and our message. While Andrew Cuomo's Super PACs blanketed the airwaves with paid ads, Zohran's campaign created a different sort of ubiquity by pairing online enthusiasm with the largest field operation in U.S. history. The launch ad which focused on the affordability crisis in this city that served as a thesis for the campaign, one Zohran and the team resoundingly proved over the course of the race. The ad is as relevant today as it was in October. We employed a video team uniquely equipped to produce rapid response videos around endorsements and other campaign news, policy explainers that make complex issues accessible, and narrative pieces that tell a broader story of the campaign. The dynamism of those videos fueled online interest in a candidate who began the race with limited name recognition; Zohran's authenticity, consistency, and clarity helped translate those into volunteers, votes, and victory.

The campaign's ads generated significant enthusiasm and attention by tapping into those same values. The campaign also took to the airwaves before any other campaign, and made a massive investment in visibility during the Knicks playoff run, understanding that a victory would be dependent on a feeling of joy and possibility, something the promise of a potential Knicks championship was filling those very same viewers with.

Focusing less on traditional news and more on entertainment and live events the paid media approach mirrored the general ethos of the campaign: Meet people where they are. In doing so, it also showcased the growing support of the campaign from key figures like Congresswomen Nydia Velázquez and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. By relying heavily on 15-second ads instead of the traditional 30s, the campaign was able to stay competitive on impressions even while super PACs flooded the airwaves.

The campaign's communications pursued the broader campaign goal of expanding the electorate. The communications team released videos in Urdu, Bangla, and Spanish that spoke directly to communities that Andrew Cuomo and other past campaigns have neglected. The campaign urged voters to update their registration in creative ways, and successfully pushed viewers to become volunteers time and again. It engaged influencers and leaders in communities across the entire city. And it maintained its focus on a central message of affordability that tapped into the concerns of New Yorkers who had never before felt compelled to vote.

Beyond the campaign's own content, it generated unprecedented amounts of earned media rooted in earnest engagement with the press corps. Zohran spoke to reporters at open press conferences often and at length, including off-topic press conferences that invited engagement on an array of issues. Beyond the New York press corps, he spoke with journalists specializing in specific policy issues, diving deep into concerns New Yorkers have while maintaining the consistency, clarity, and authenticity that guided all campaign comms. The communications team also extracted significant press coverage from each policy rollout throughout the campaign, showcasing a deep and sustained engagement with the issues facing New York. And it showcased the unprecedented enthusiasm for the campaign by generating coverage of historic rallies at Brooklyn Steel and Terminal 5. Rallies with a Presidential campaign quality presentation and size were a deliberate choice. If people had questions about Zohran's ability to govern, we wanted them to be able to see the campaign's ability to execute at scale. As a campaign the standard was always excellence - because that, and nothing less, will be the standard for the Mamdani administration too.

F I E L D

No municipal campaign has ever organized a field outreach campaign as comprehensive or ambitious as Zohran's. We believe that this was the most effective field campaign in modern American history. Typically dismissed as a secondary concern with negligible impact on the outcome of a race (the common refrain is that the best field program can sway, at most, 3% of the electorate), this campaign is unapologetically built around its massive field program. The campaign boasts the largest volunteer field operation in New York City history.

Boasting 50,145 volunteers and 499 field leads, we have knocked on over 1.5 million doors and made 2.1 million phone calls. The field team ran canvasses seven days a week across more than 65 neighborhoods for five months, and held phone banks two to five times a week, with phone banks everyday, all day the last four days of the campaign. Just as important, our massive field program has created a feeling of community that encourages young voters to involve themselves in the race (and remain involved!). That sense of belonging defines Zohran's positive, vigorous perception that persuaded so many voters, and ensures continued visibility across the city.

P O L I T I C A L

This campaign pursued an expansive, all-inclusive political strategy — one that worked in tandem with its communications and field efforts to reach voters in every borough and across every racial demographic and faith background. It also sought to earn and deploy key endorsements from elected officials, labor, and movement organizations in areas where they accorded relational credibility.

As Zohran began to grow his name recognition and support over the last two months of the campaign, outreach to key electeds was deepened. The numbers tell the story — on April 9, Zohran had six endorsements, all of which were from long-standing socialist allies. Nine weeks later on Election Day, he could boast 40, including the influential support of Senator Bernie Sanders and Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Nydia Velázquez. These endorsements were strategically wielded over the final stretch of the campaign to persuade voters in areas where validators possessed high name recognition and via their inclusion in campaign materials — palm cards, TV ads, rally speeches, mailers, and more. Zohran also made deep efforts to cultivate relationships with labor endorsers and ultimately secured the transformative DC37 #2 endorsement, as well as support from UAW 9A, UNITE Here Local 100, CIR-SEIU, PSC-CUNY, and many others.

Zohran made great efforts to build a multiethnic, multigenerational coalition that looked like the city he sought to represent. He attended two churches nearly every Sunday for the last eight weeks of the campaign (with a pronounced focus on Black churches), extended continuous outreach to the Jewish community via synagogue visits and rabbinical meetings, held town halls with specific constituency focuses (i.e. an anti-trust town hall targeted at liberal New Yorkers with Lina Khan and Zephyr Teachout in the West Village, a Puerto Rico tele-town hall with Rep. Nydia Velázquez etc.), and planned his schedule to spend time in targeted areas that raised visibility with target demographics whether it was walking through Flushing with State Senator John Liu or spending election day morning in Astoria with Emily Ratajowski.

THE NOMINEE: *Zohran Mamdani won the Democratic mayoral nomination on June 24. He will compete in the November 4 general election against Republican Curtis Sliwa and Mayor Eric Adams running as an independent.*

FUNDRAISING

Our campaign fundraised to the spending cap of nearly $8 million for the primary in March — the fastest any New York City campaign has hit that mark in history. That record-breaking pace meant Zohran began telling supporters to stop donating to him, allowing us to steer them to other ways to support the campaign and to focus on other parts of its operations. It also enabled Zohran to twice encourage his followers to donate to other candidates, including to fellow mayoral candidate Adrienne Adams.

The story of Zohran's fundraising success is not just its speed, but also its breadth of support. While Andrew Cuomo's campaign relied on an average of $700 from 5,730 donors, Zohran's primary campaign was fueled by 20,720 donors who gave an average of $82 each. That broad base of support shows the success of the campaign's strategy to engage New Yorkers who had never before been given a reason to participate in an electoral campaign. This organic momentum, and our faith that it would occur, allowed us to forgo investments in attracting new viewers to our online platforms, saving the campaign valuable resources. The campaign produced a video about this phenomenon, and the grassroots nature of its fundraising also showed up in the groundswell of volunteers, and in the more than 432,000 New Yorkers who ranked Zohran first on their ballots.

RUNNING A DISCIPLINED, BOLD, VISIONARY CAMPAIGN

Zohran has always believed that New Yorkers deserve a mayor who "hustles as hard as they do." On the morning of the election, he woke up at 4am for a sunrise press conference — meant to symbolize the dawn of a new era for New York City. Just two days prior, Zohran walked the entire length of Manhattan, greeting voters and answering their questions along the way. His walk energized the thousands of New Yorkers who saw him on the road and millions more who heard about his trek online and watched the campaign's recap. The video received 11.4 million views.

This ethic was embodied across eight months of strategic campaign planning and deployment, and demonstrated the ability for a campaign run and waged by the Left to win. From operating daily canvasses with thousands of volunteers to managing 70 volunteers to hold an over 3,000-person rally just weeks before the election, our campaign showed what a dedicated strategy and managerial capacity looks like. We will have created a new blueprint for Left campaigns as a result.

THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE

From frigid winter days when their candidate was polling in the low single digits to the final sweltering hours outside polling stations when Zohran Mamdani was rapidly closing in on Andrew Cuomo, his supporters fanned out across the city to talk with their fellow New Yorkers. In the end, Mamdani's campaign would attract more than 50,000 volunteers, knock on 1.6 million doors and have countless conversations about how to win a more just and affordable city.

LAUNCHING PAD: *Zohran Mamdani and 300 New York City DSA volunteers gathered at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Brooklyn in early December for a training session on how to lead canvassing shifts.*
CREDIT: MICHAEL PAULSON

TEAMWORK: *Three Zohran Mamdani canvassers prepare to canvass the Lower East Side.*
CREDIT: COURTESY

PETITIONING: *A team of Mamdani volunteers gathers on an early morning in March to gather petition signatures from Astoria commuters to get their candidate on the mayoral ballot.*

WHATEVER IT TAKES: *Mamdani volunteers gather in 32 degree weather outside the Brooklyn Museum on December 14 for the first day of canvassing. "I want to be in favor of something for once," said one canvasser.*

FAVORITE SON: *Zohran Mamdani at a rally in Little Bangladesh in Jamaica, Queens, a community that overwhelmingly voted for him in the Democratic primary.*

A COMMON THREAD: *Zohran Mamdani speaks at a Dec. 14 protest in the Garment District.*
CREDIT: RICHARD SWOFFORD

READY TO GO: *A Lower East Side canvassing team prepares to head out for a June canvas.*
CREDIT: COURTESY

NO BACKING DOWN: *Zohran Mamdani speaks at a rally organized by NYC-DSA calling on local hospitals to defy President Trump and provide gender affirming care for transgender youth.*
CREDIT: COURTESY

AMONG FRIENDS: *Zohran Mamdani with supporters in Von King Park.*
CREDIT: JACK CALIFANO

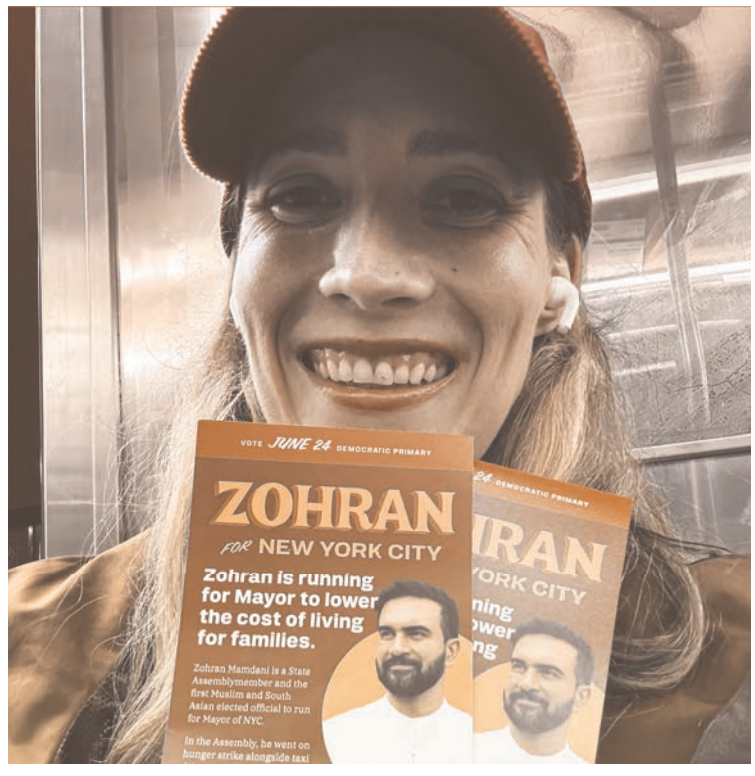
FAST-GROWING MOVEMENT *Three hundred Mamdani volunteers pose for a group photo in Herbert Von King Park before fanning out to canvas in the surrounding Bed-Stuy neighborhood.*
CREDIT: JACK CALIFANO

VICTORY!: *Mamdani volunteers react with stunned disbelief as Andrew Cuomo gives his election night concession speech.*

CANVASSIN

For Zohran Mamdani's army of door-to-door canvassers, each shift brought new chances to connect with their fellow New Yorkers. Persuading voters to support their candidate was the goal. But for many the process also became its own reward as they go to know their community and their fellow volunteers. "I thought it was something I should show up to do," one canvasser told *The Indypendent*, "and I stayed because I actually just love talking to my neighbors."

By John Tarleton


VOTE JUNE 24 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY
ZOHRAN
FOR NEW YORK CITY
Zohran is running for Mayor to lower the cost of living for families.
Zohran Mamdani is a State Assemblymember and the first Muslim and South Asian elected official to run for Mayor of NYC.
In the Assembly, he went on hunger strike alongside taxi

IZZY SANCHEZ

I live in Brooklyn, but I grew up in the Bronx. I felt a responsibility to my hometown and started leading shifts there. One Wednesday evening a few weeks before the election, we were going around in a circle introducing ourselves. There's this middle-aged mom who is there with her daughter who is like 9 or 10, and they're both wearing a lot of Zohran merch. And I'm like, "You brought your daughter" and she was like "Yeah, this is her second or third canvas." They were at Zohran's big rally in May at Brooklyn Steel and every time she talks to people about it, she says, "I really hope he wins."

It was a big moment for me to see as a brown person, as a person who has been racialized, to see that the coalition has been built. It's not just white kids. It's not just transplants. It's moms. It's immigrants. It's just people who want a slightly more affordable city. That really moved me.

Coincidentally, at that same canvas, I met someone who had gone to the same college as one of my ex-girlfriends. Everything felt very full circle – that our opponents can throw all their money and negative ads at us, but we're actually building something that can beat that.

AMANDA VENDER

Something that made canvassing for Zohran special was the enthusiasm of youth. When I had to choose which buzzer to ring first to enter a building, I consulted the MiniVan app on my phone and always went with a voter under 35 because I knew they'd be a likely supporter and let me in. At one door in Sunnyside, two children around 6 and 8 years old answered the door. I introduced myself and asked for the parents. "Our parents aren't home," one said, "but we want our parents to vote for Zohran!"

I also had many good conversations with people while canvassing and sometimes I was able to change some minds. For example, at a door in Woodside the day before the election, I talked with a young mom who told me, "I was just going to vote for Cuomo as I liked his briefings during the pandemic, but I'd like to hear what you have to say." She listened to me talk about Zohran's platform, his background, and why I trust him over Cuomo. I couldn't get a final commitment from her, but in the end, I recorded her as a "Lean Zohran."

On election day after being up since 5:30am, I stood at the Jackson Heights subway at 8:10pm with my Zohran for NYC sign, wondering how much more my legs could take. But then a large family coming from a graduation walked by. "Yay Zohran!" the graduate said. And then she said, "Oh wait, we have to go vote!" They all turned and headed to the poll.

KATIE WAYRO

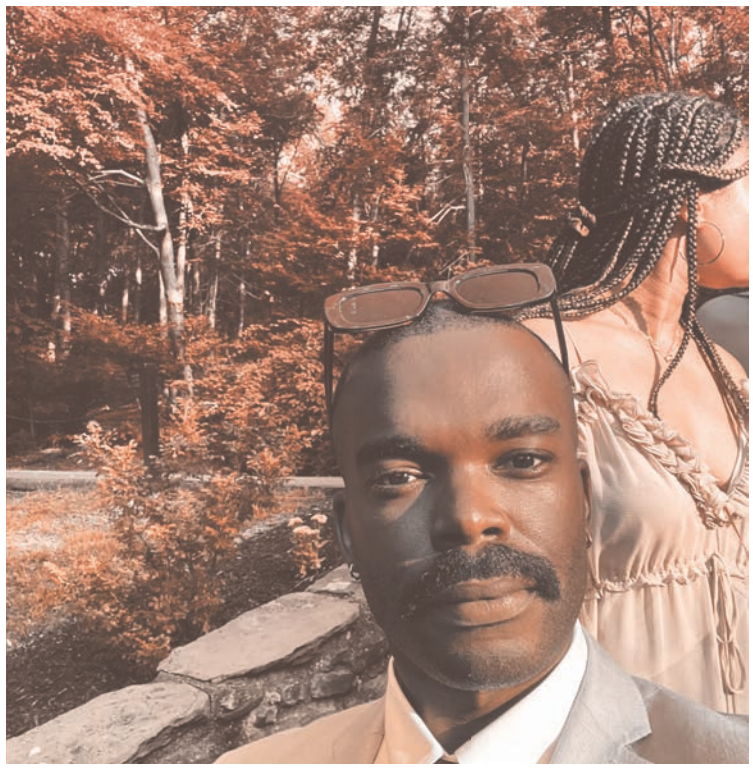
I started in February or March, and initially I went every Thursday evening as a weekly activity and then intensified around the end of May. Our Thursday group kept growing and growing until the final Thursday we had over 60 people signed up that day.

If you told me I was going to knock on my neighbors' doors and talk to them about politics, that sounds like a nightmare, especially in New York. I don't want people to knock on my door. It's annoying. But what I found was that I loved my neighbors a lot more during and after this election, and it was because of all the conversations I had with folks here in Astoria who I had never talked to previously.

It wasn't necessarily big, deep political conversations. When I wore a Springsteen shirt, people would talk to me about how much the album The Rising meant to them after 9/11. Or, we would say "Zohran wants to expand childcare" and I can't tell you how many grandparents were elated to show me photos of their grandkids who they don't want to see leave the city because it's unaffordable. And I was like "I want you to be able to, like, have your grandkids in the city too. I want your kids to be able to afford to raise a family here."

A lot of conversations I had were with folks who certainly are not radicals. You would not necessarily think they would be getting in the booth and voting for a man named Zohran Mandani, who is a Democratic socialist. They are the people who registered as Democrats probably 40 years ago and are actually, like, pretty conservative. They have kids and maybe own their homes, but recognize it's hard to get by in the city. I started canvassing, because I thought it was something I should show up to do, and I stayed because I actually just love talking to my neighbors.

IG STORIES



MAGDALENA M.

I moved to Astoria last year, but I'm originally from Ridgewood, Queens and still have family ties there. When Zohran told me last year he was running on fast and free buses, I was entirely on board. Ridgewood is a transit desert. The M train sucks. The Q39 sucks. It barely runs. I love the bus. It's obviously the only way to get to a lot of parts of Queens. It's something that working class people rely on. So fast and free buses, I think would be life changing for my aunt and life changing for me.

I started canvassing in January and became the field lead for the Thursday night canvassing shift in Astoria. My favorite canvassing partner joined us because Zohran had helped her mom from getting evicted from her home during COVID. Now, she wanted to help him. She was super nervous when she started but ended up loving canvassing. She was a natural and when she shared her story about Zohran at the door, people paid attention to that. She liked learning about the policies, and loved talking about the rent freeze and government-run grocery stores that could offer low-cost groceries in places that are currently food deserts.

The people I got to meet, the people I got to train up to be leaders that were developed through this campaign, the amount of people who canvassed for the first time ever and then became regulars or have already been texting me about canvassing again, has been amazing. I want to canvass places we haven't canvassed before. But first, I would love to take a summer break.

JOSE SANCHEZ

I am a gay Afro-Puerto Rican man. My first protest was Occupy Wall Street when I was a senior in high school and I would come over from New Jersey. New York City DSA has been my political home since after Bernie's first presidential run. I canvassed for Zohran in Crown Heights, Bed-Stuy, Bushwick and Williamsburg. I started canvassing in February. It was so cold I was wearing a pea coat and gloves. At first, I was like "there's no way he's going to win." It was around that time we were canvassing in a NYCHA building and we helped carry an elderly Black woman up the stairs in her wheelchair after the elevator got stuck.

As we got closer to primary day, we were getting 80% positive responses from the people we canvassed. It seemed too good to be true. The older people were more pro-Cuomo, but the newer buildings that were full of transplants were for Zohran. One young voter mentioned Israel explicitly. He was like, "I don't like that. We're spending so much money for Israel, and we're not getting anything, and that's why I'm voting for Zohran."

On primary day, I was doing pollsite visibility and sweat was just dripping down my face. It seemed like almost everyone was for Zohran. This one person was like "I voted already. Do you want my water?" and she poured the water from her container into mine.

PETE SIKORA

I'm a busy dad to two. It's not easy for me to make it to canvas shifts. Instead, I painted "Don't Vote for Cuomo" and "Mamdani for Mayor" signs and set up a table in front of my building. I work mostly from home for New York Communities for Change, so I could just come down and set the table up and talk to everyone who went by while sitting on my stoop for an hour or three. I did that 3 or 4 days a week for about 6 weeks.

I live in Cobble Hill/Carroll Gardens, an affluent liberal and anti-Cuomo area. My aim was to increase turnout, drive down Cuomo's marginal support, and push Mamdani, especially to potentially skeptical liberals.

I know I directly persuaded people by talking to them. Also, being a 50 year old dad-looking guy just sitting on his stoop chatting to everyone passing by helped create a local vibe - and moved votes.

I could tell that we were in a position to potentially win because under-50 year olds were psyched, where usually younger or young-ish voters are only a little checked in. After the election, it was really fun. Just the day after I probably had like 15 people - most of whom I don't know - tell me congratulations or fist pump from across the street or something. Someone even left a thank you note on our building's door. I also met a lot of neighbors. People really appreciated the effort. Don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise: one-to-one contact works!

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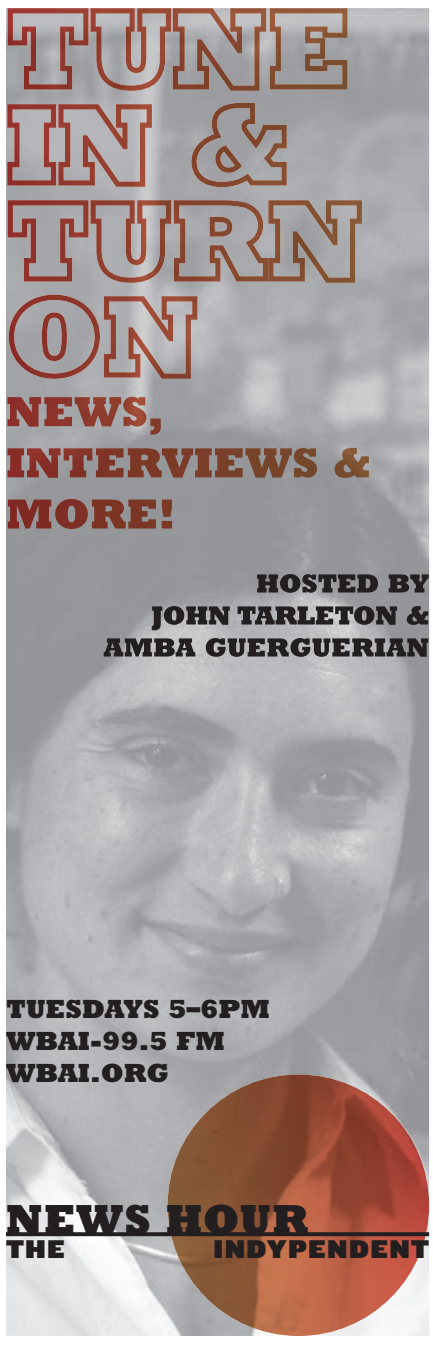

CITY COUNCIL

SOLIDARITY BEATS SOLIDARITY PAC

PRO-ISRAEL BILLIONAIRES FAIL TO DISLODGE POPULAR BROOKLYN CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

SUE BRISK

SUE BRISK

By Theodore Hamm

LANDSLIDE: *City councilmember Alexa Avilés (D-Sunset Park) was re-elected by more than 40 points after being targeted by the Israel lobby for supporting a Gaza ceasefire resolution*

FOUR MORE YEARS: *City Councilmember Shahana Hanif (D-Park Slope) also was re-elected by more than 40 points despite fierce opposition from the Israel lobby.*

As the *Indypendent* reported this spring, pro-Israel donors sought to unseat Brooklyn councilwomen Alexa Avilés, a DSA member, and Shahana Hanif, a progressive Muslim.

On June 24, voters in adjoining districts—with Avilés representing Red Hook, Sunset Park, and Bensonhurst; and Hanif covering the southern half of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace and Kensington—overwhelmingly reelected the two incumbents, with each amassing roughly 70% support.

Solidarity PAC (a local edition of AIPAC) helped fund and promote the unsuccessful challengers to both Avilés and Hanif, and it also encouraged voters to rank Andrew Cuomo as their first choice for mayor, followed by any combination of Whitney Tilson, Scott Stringer, Zellnor Myrie, and Jessica Ramos.

"If Cuomo is not your choice, please consider ranking him #2," urged the PAC's website. "Do not rank Zohran Mamdani," the group pleaded.

Attorney Maya Kornberg, who lost to Hanif, and Ling Ye, a staffer for Rep. Dan Goldman who challenged Avilés, were thus not the only losers backed by Solidarity PAC. The group also endorsed Eric Adams' ally Jennifer Rajkumar, whose bid to unseat Public Advocate Jumaane Williams was likewise crushed.

Mamdani easily won Avilés' district and also hauled in large numbers of votes in Kensington, where he did a campaign stop on the Sunday before the primary. Hanif helped rally her fellow Bangladeshi voters in support of Mamdani. Brad Lander's best returns came from Park Slope, which he had represented in the council before passing the torch to Hanif, his former staffer.

Prominent pro-Israel billionaires Bill Ackman and Dan Loeb also gave large contributions to an outside spending outfit innocuously named New Yorkers for a Better Future 2025. Ackman's $250K and Loeb's $50k helped the group collect nearly $2 million.

"Better Future" spent over $80k smearing Avilés. On the Sunday before the primary, Avilés displayed a stack of attack mailers to a group of over 100 volunteers (ready to knock on doors for both Avilés and Mamdani), with the councilwoman ridiculing the garbage lit.

At the same rally, Avilés' fellow DSA ally Assemblywoman Marcela Mitaynes told the *Indypendent* that they fully expected to win two days later— but now wanted to run up the score. The initial primary vote total in Mitaynes' Assembly District was a whopping 7900-2250 in favor of Avilés.

Ye did better in the Brooklyn Chinatown portions of Avilés's council district, which straddles the D train line from Sunset Park through Bensonhurst. But the incumbent held her own, with the initial returns showing the challenger up by only 76 votes in Bensonhurst. The Asian activist group CAAAV sent many Chinese-speaking canvassers into the field for both Avilés and Mamdani, who also did well in an area with many tenants.

When the *Indy* first wrote about the slimy effort against Hanif in March, activist Seth Pollack, a canvasser for the progressive incumbent, told me that he strongly doubted that the Solidarity PAC attacks would work in "a high-information voter district" home to many Jewish and Muslim voters critical of Israel.

In early June, labor lawyer Paul Sonn, who campaigned for Hanif at the Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket and elsewhere in the greater Slope, told the *Indypendent* that he was seeing overwhelming support for the Bangladeshi American incumbent

The forecasts of Pollack and Sonn were indeed quite accurate. Lo and behold, it appears that people on the ground know their neighborhoods just a little bit better than Manhattan billionaires whose main concern is protecting a rogue nation 5,700 miles away.

NYC BRIEFS

BY INDYPENDENT STAFF

JIM DIAMOND

ADAMS KICKS OFF RE-ELECTION BID

Mayor Eric Adams, running as an independent after withdrawing from the Democratic primary, kicked off his re-election campaign in a rally on the steps of City Hall June 26. Adams, whose federal corruption charges were dropped by the Trump administration after he agreed to cooperate with its assault on immigrants, criticized Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani as having grown up "with a silver spoon." He has also been seeking support from wealthy donors desperate to stop the democratic socialist, such as hedge-fund manager Daniel Loeb, who gave $1 million to a pro-Adams PAC in 2021, and landlord Scott Rechler. Billionaire Bill Ackman, who gave $500,000 to Cuomo's Fix the City PAC, has pledged to fund a "centrist candidate" to stop Mamdani. Ackman wrote on X June 25 that he had "a superb candidate who I believe can win," but couldn't say his name in public because it would be tainted, "as I am a supporter of President Trump."

PRO-CUOMO UNIONS SWITCH TO MAMDANI

Three major city labor unions quickly endorsed Zohran Mamdani for mayor after he won the Democratic primary June 24, including two that had backed former governor Andrew Cuomo. The Hotel and Gaming Trades Council and the building-service workers union 32BJ SEIU announced their support within four days, as did the New York State Nurses Association, which had been neutral. "Zohran Mamdani has united and inspired New Yorkers around a positive and optimistic vision for a truly affordable city," 32BJ said in a statement. "New York's janitors, airport workers, residential building service workers, security officers, school custodians and window cleaners are ready to join Zohran in the effort to achieve that vision." The health-care union 1199SEIU, which also backed Cuomo, will decide its choice later this month. United Auto Workers Region 9A had endorsed the Queens Assemblymember in the primary, while District Council 37, the city's largest public-sector union, ranked him second behind City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams. The labor support also means money and get-out-the-vote campaigns for Mamdani.

BACK IN THE FIGHT: *Mayor Eric Adams hopes Andrew Cuomo's downfall could revive his career.*

NY TOP COURT UPHOLDS KINGSTON RENT REGULATIONS

New York State's highest court on June 18 unanimously rejected a landlord group's bid to kill Kingston's 2022 rent-stabilization law. The group, the Hudson Valley Property Owners Association, had contested the city of 24,000's survey that found a vacancy rate below 5% in the 1,300 apartments rent stabilization would cover, low enough to declare a "housing emergency." The landlords claimed it was invalid because only about 40% of the owners of those apartments had responded. But the 7-0 decision by the Court of Appeals ruled that the survey had counted more than 70% of the eligible apartments, and owners had been notified by certified mail that if they didn't respond, their apartments would be counted as occupied. "The courts have been clear over and over again: Tenants have the right to stay in our homes, whether through rent reductions, rent stabilization, or Good Cause," Cea Weaver of Housing Justice for All told City & State. A lower appeals court had previously upheld the 15% rent rollback the Kingston rent board voted in 2022.

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‘WE WILL BEAT THESE MONSTERS’

SEXUAL HARASSMENT WHISTLEBLOWER LINDSEY BOYLAN REACTS TO CUOMO’S DOWNFALL

FRANCES F. DENNEY

UNBOWED: *Lindsey Boylan*

By Ariana Orozco

In the wake of Zohran Mamdani’s win, many political pundits and institutional politicians are wondering: what happened? *The Indypendent* spoke with Lindsay Boylan, one of the many people who helped ensure disgraced governor Andrew Cuomo would never see office again.

Boyland was the first of 11 women came forward with accusations of Cuomo’s sexual harassment, including lewd language, groping, and kissing in the workplace in 2021. Upon investigation, Cuomo was found to have harassed 13 women during his time as governor. Cuomo’s legal defense has cost public taxpayers around $60 million, and his campaign of retribution against those women has not stopped.

Lindsey Boylan, a former economic development advisor to Cuomo, was the first of those 11 women to speak out. She had to face the full wrath of Cuomo’s political machine. Boylan remains outspoken about the former governor’s sordid history. She joined us on *The Indypendent* News Hour’s election night special on WBAI shortly after it became clear that Andrew Cuomo was headed to defeat.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

INDYPENDENT: Do you want to describe a little about what you did to stop Cuomo?

LINDSEY BOYLAN: Sure, first I just want to say I’m stunned in such a positive way. Everyone who was working against Cuomo was working together. We didn’t want to leave anything on the table and we didn’t. There are so many people who have a huge role to play in this, and I want to say thank you.

For my part, the day Cuomo announced his campaign, I released a piece in Vanity Fair because I did not want women to be forgotten. It is unacceptable for abusers like Andrew Cuomo to erase their harm and tonight proved that they can’t. And I’ve never been more appreciative for this coalition of people who wanted to form DREAM and the many candidates who said they would not accept Andrew Cuomo.

This morning, I went to the polls to canvas amongst hundreds of other people. And these coalitions are what makes this remarkable and so redeeming. I’ve never seen anything like it in my career. And I hope every woman who has ever faced an abuser like Cuomo knows she doesn’t have to be ashamed, she doesn’t have to hide. Because we will beat these monsters. New Yorkers said “no more” to Andrew Cuomo, and that is just remarkable. I am so excited for Zohran and his team.

What do you think Cuomo’s camp is thinking right now?

They’re cooked. It’s over. He tried to smear Zohran like he did me and the other women he abused. He will wake up tomorrow and have his team of corrupt abuse supporters spin this, but he knows it’s over. Zohran went up against tens of millions of dollars of dark money – corporations bought themselves a candidate in Andrew Cuomo. Cuomo had the top labor unions and institutions who did not even have their rank-and-file members vote on who they supported. This is as corrupt as they can come and Zohran overcame, and this coalition overcame.

Do you feel a sense of closure now that Cuomo has suffered this epic defeat?

I feel a tremendous sense of victory and I share this with every woman whose abuser has tried to discredit and shame them. The wind is out the sails for people who use other’s harm for propaganda. People like Roberta Caplan who claimed to have been supporters of women’s needs and rights and then supported Andrew Cuomo. The wind has gone out of the sails for people who cynically support causes they do not actually care about. This is a new day. My mayor and my daughter’s mayor is not going to be this monster.

Do you feel any worry about Zohran facing Eric Adams in November?

This man has just humiliated the machine of New York. And now he will humiliate anyone who tries to buy elections.

Do you think Zohran’s victory will trigger a wave of challenges to institutional candidates?

Yes! The coalition that has been built is the most exciting time in New York City politics I’ve seen in my lifetime. I certainly hope it has an impact on who the Democratic Party chooses to platform and support because this is the most important and populous city in the country and every career politician has chosen to cynically sit this one out. We need to continue to see this change, and I’m so excited to see that Zohran Mamdani and his coalition are going to help us change the way we do politics.

HYPOCRITES!

“The widespread collapse of confidence among both the congressional delegation and the state legislature has made the state no longer governable under his leadership,” Congressmember Ritchie Torres of the Bronx said in March 2021 when he called on then Gov. Andrew Cuomo to resign. Four years later, Torres was touting Cuomo’s bid for mayor stating “New York loves a comeback.”

Torres was far from alone in his political shape-shifting. Here, according to Politico, are the rest of the miscreants who thought Cuomo was unfit to be governor but supported him for New York City mayor. They are all up for re-election next year.

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Manhattan-Bronx

Congressmember GREG MEEKS
Queens

Congressman TOM SUOZZI
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Assemblymember CLYDE VANEL
Queens

Assemblymember DAVID WEPRIN
Queens

– INDYPENDENT STAFF